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# Adjectives or Verbs? The Case of Deverbal Adjectives in -ED

Jean Albrespit

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Adjectives form a category which is notoriously difficult to define as it has “potentially boundless membership” [Givón 1970: 816]. Furthermore, as Givón [1970: 816] observes, “the great bulk [of adjectives] are morphologically derived from either nouns or verbs.” This article will focus on one of the possible ways of creating an adjective, i.e. by using a verb and more specifically the past participle of a verb, as in, for instance:

(1) The courtyard was bounded by a range of cloisters two storeys high  
(William Dalrymple, *City of Djims*, 1993, BNC).

- 2 Adjectives formed in this way are not the result of a straightforward case of derivation (due to the fact that -ED can be both an inflectional suffix and a derivational suffix): an ambiguity often remains as to the status of the V-ED form (-ED will stand for “past participle”), between adjective and verb, especially where adjectival passives are concerned (Bolinger [1967]; Wasow [1977]; Levin & Rappaport [1986]; Grimshaw & Vikner [1993]; Ackerman & Goldberg [1996], [2001]; Kibort [2005]; Lundquist [2013]; McIntyre [2013]; Bruening [2014]). Such terminology as “adjective-like”, “participial adjectives” (Quirk *et al.* [1985: 168]; Huddleston & Pullum [2002: 78]), or, more rarely in the description of English, “verbal adjectives”<sup>2</sup>, is a sign of the difficulty of identifying what appears to be a hybrid form. It has been pointed out (Oltra-Massuet [2014: 8]) that deverbal adjectives raise problems of morphology, syntax and semantics. The word *brown*, for example, when taken in isolation, can be an adjective or, in specialised contexts, a verb or a noun obtained by conversion. The past participle of the verb in the following recipe can be interpreted as indicating a state which is reached and therefore as having acquired an adjectival status:

(2) Turn them all evenly 2 or 3 times until nicely **browned** all over.  
([www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2013/jan/17/how-to-cook-perfect-sauteed-potatoes](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2013/jan/17/how-to-cook-perfect-sauteed-potatoes))

- 3 In the following example, however, -ED is an inflection and V-ED has the status of a verb:

(3) Stir in the beef and red pepper and continue to fry until the meat **has browned**. (BBC Good Food, 1991, BNC)

- 4 The aim of this article is thus to address the issue of how verbs can be “stabilised” into adjectives (by “stabilise”, we refer to referential stabilisation, which means that the newly-formed adjective is easily understandable by a co-speaker and that the co-speaker can associate a reference to the lexeme without ambiguity or too great a cognitive effort). There seems to be no systematic, clear-cut distinction between states and resultant states<sup>3</sup>. Let us consider two sentences:

- (a) The door was lined with metal  
(b) The door was locked.

- 5 In the first sentence, with “lined”, the stabilisation is complete and there is no reference to a change of state, whereas with “locked” in sentence (b), the deriving verb can be reactivated (especially since the process *lock* implies a doer and thus intentionality), as can be shown by adding an adverb – “the door was suddenly locked” –, as in the following example:

(4) I had been sitting in the room for only a moment when the door **was suddenly locked** from the outside. (Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, Ohio University, 1994)

- 6 Although most occurrences of adjectival participles are part of passive constructions, it has been noted (Kibort [2005]) that derivational adjectives are independent of passivisation, which means that they can occur in various contexts which will be examined below. Throughout this study adjectival participles will be referred to as “V-ED adjectives”.
- 7 If the V-ED structure has been studied extensively in relation to its hypothesized adjectival features, less attention has been paid to discursive strategies and pragmatic parameters. One of the aims of this article is to take context into account, not just isolated forms. The present study is based on written and spoken corpora (BNC, COCA and a web search). The parameters surveyed are:
- the lexical aspect of the verb
  - agentivity (recoverable or not)
  - prefixing (for instance the prefix *be-* in *bedecked* or the negative prefix *un-* in *unchecked*)
  - lexicalization (particularly the contribution of the noun in a collocation of the type *abandoned child*)
  - syntax (attributive or predicative position, the possibility of preposing or postposing, complementation, as in: *But Mr. Lorette seemed possessed of a miraculous talent* (Fiona Davis, *The Masterpiece*); *Pietro Miletto appeared, his elegant shoes and trousers bespattered with mud* (BNC)).
- 8 The conclusion which is reached is that instability is inherent to the use of V-ED adjectives as any variation (the presence of an adverb for example) can change the

interpretation. The process of stabilisation is seen as linked to two major parameters: the suppression of the origin of the potential change of state (and the absence of telicity) and the backgrounding of agentivity.

## 1. Defining adjectives

- 9 Before examining the more or less stative nature of V-EDs, it will be useful to provide a brief review of the criteria defined in reference grammars to decide if a word belongs to the class of adjectives.
- 10 Quirk *et al* [1985: 404] distinguish between “central” and “peripheral” adjectives. Central adjectives display a set of properties: they can occur in an attributive position or a predicative function after the copula *seem*, can be premodified by *very* and can be used as a comparative. They semantically denote a property of the noun. In the same vein, Huddleston & Pullum, [2002: 528] mention “central members of the adjective category” as having a “cluster of syntactic properties”: they can appear in three main functions – attributive, predicative and postpositive, are gradable and have inflectional or analytic comparatives and superlatives –, and “characteristically take adverbs as modifiers (*remarkably happy, surprisingly good*)”. As Bolinger [1967: 2-3] observes, “there are many attributive adjectives that are never predicative” but “fewer of them that are predicative but seldom or never attributive”. Therefore, the possibility of a V-ED form occurring in an attributive position is a robust test for determining its adjectival quality. Hence the example *a fallen leaf*, where “fallen” refers to the result of an action and consequently to a state. When does a V-ED become an adjective? This is an issue that will be addressed in this study. Apart from making a terminological point, determining the adjectival character of a V-ED appears crucial in assessing the role it plays in the information structure.

## 2. A typology of deverbal adjectives in -ED

- 11 In this section, the growing degree of “stativeness” and therefore of “adjectiveness” is examined, starting with lexicalised forms and moving on to the role of affixation and lastly syntax.

### 2.1. Lexicalised V-EDs and loan words

- 12 It is a well-known fact that the morph -ED possibly represents three suffixes which have merged: the verbal suffix of the past participle, the suffix -ED deriving adjectives from nouns (from Old English *-ede*<sup>4</sup>) and the suffix -ED “added to adapted forms of Latin participles, the intention being to assimilate these words in form to the native words which they resembled in function” (OED). There is only a small class of such adjectives, some of them being obsolete (*acquisited*) or technical (*versed*, a word used in trigonometry). They are fossilised forms of the type *situated*:

(5) **Situated learning** emphasizes the context and application and use of knowledge. (<https://sites.google.com/site/socialapproachestolearning>)

(6a) Penns Hall **is situated** just 6 miles from the centre of Birmingham. (BNC)

- 13 Although they are not central adjectives (Quirk *et al.* [1985: 404]) as they cannot be premodified by *very* (*\*very situated*) and cannot be used in the comparative (*\*more/\*most situated*), they have at least the adjectival property of being statives. No underlying process can be retrieved:

(6b) \*Penns Hall is **suddenly** situated just 6 miles from the centre of Birmingham.

- 14 In (7), *detached* can be construed as the result of an action made by an agent or at least an “agent of result<sup>5</sup>” (Bolinger [1972: 201]) or, as in (8), a state which does not result from a previous action:

(7) Control knobs may be **detached** and placed in the fryer basket for soaking. (Rae North, *Cleaning Professional Kitchens*, 1985, BNC)

(8) Across the road was a **detached house** – white, marbled, single-storeyed, with a pool and a 6ft-high wall. (*The Daily Mirror*, 1992, BNC)

There is therefore no ambiguity as to the adjectival status of V-EDs belonging to this class.

- 15 A marginal category of V-EDs comprises “double” past participles in French loan-words, such as *appliqueed* and *sautéed*. These words are used almost exclusively in an attributive position (*appliqueed tea towels*, *sautéed potatoes*), in an adjectival function, and rarely as verbs. In (9) the author does use *sautéé* as a verb in an article comprising many words borrowed from French, so this could be due to stylistic variation:

(9) Anthony Bourdain **sautees** his potatoes in bacon fat, rendered from lardons cooked alongside the spuds. ([www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2013/jan/17/how-to-cook-perfect-sauteed-potatoes](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2013/jan/17/how-to-cook-perfect-sauteed-potatoes))

- 16 Lastly, a number of V-EDs are fully lexicalized as adjectives: *addled*, *bewildered*, *elated*, *cadenced* (perhaps derived from the noun *cadence*), *confused*, *disgruntled*, *embarrassed*, *excited*, *muddled*, *perplexed*, and even though a corresponding verb still exists, all relation to the verb has been severed. A subcategory of verbs prefixed with *un-* (*unfettered*, *undaunted*, *unabashed*, *unscathed*) or *dis-* (*disconcerted*, *discomfited*, *disordered*) no longer has an active relation with the verb it is derived from.

## 2.2. Affixed V-EDs

- 17 Some prefixes and suffixes are determining factors in the acceptability of a V-ED in attributive position.

### 2.2.1. *un-*V-ED

- 18 The negative prefix *un-* is by far the most productive prefix: the V-EDs *unchecked*, *unattached*, *uncommitted*, *unbuilt*, *undrunk*, *uneaten*, etc. can all freely fill a prenominal slot when non-derived verbs cannot systematically occupy a prenominal position:

(10) Why can't every child have the same worth as a human? When an **unliked child** grows up, how is he or she going to treat people? (<https://divorcedmoms.com/the-favorite-child-vs-the-unliked-child/>)

- 19 In (10), \**a liked child* would not be acceptable. The title of the post is indeed “The Favorite Child vs. The Unliked Child”, showing that even in a context in which two notions are opposed and which usually licences the use of a participial adjective in prenominal position, the antonym of *unliked* is *favorite*, not *liked*. The prefix “freezes” the verb into an adjective as the verbal function cannot be reactivated, as is apparent in the following example:

(11) “When I’m eighteen and can do what I like, I’ll **eat all my cakes uncooked**,” Benny pronounced. (Maevy Binchy, *Circle of Friends*, 1991, BNC)

- 20 It is impossible to “uncook” a cake (as it is impossible to “unlike” a child in 10); therefore, there can be no ambiguity as to its adjectival function:

(12) Moreover the baked bread tends to collapse on cooling or to **be uncooked** in the centre. (*New Scientist*, BNC)

*Be* can be identified as a copulative verb only, not as an auxiliary of the passive.

- 21 However, it is to be noted that new uses can be licenced especially in specialised contexts: for instance, the verb *unlike* is a feature of Facebook and on sites like Research Gate, it is possible to *unfollow*:

(13) It’s hard on the ego, **being** gradually **unfollowed** by 24 million people over the course of several years. ([www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/27/justin-bieber-pop-idols-never-die](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/27/justin-bieber-pop-idols-never-die))

The function of *un-* + V-ED will be further studied in section 3.

### 2.2.2. *be*-V-ED and *re*-V-ED

- 22 Verbs derived from nouns by way of the prefix *be-* and in the past participle: *bedecked*, *beloved*, *bejeweled*, *bespectacled*, *besmeared*, *bemused*, *bespattered*, *bewitched*, etc. are good candidates for the attributive position:

(14) Leonard was up, standing his ground, his arms folded across **the bespattered apron**. (Ron Carlson, *Truants*, 1981)

- 23 When there are two different forms – *loved* and *beloved* –, the derived form in *be-* can be used as an adjective without any syntactic restriction:

(15) Young is up by 10 am for breakfast with his wife and three children: two teenage boys and Hannah Harley, four, named after his **beloved motorbike**. (*Daily Telegraph*, BNC)

(16) *R. rubrifolia* is the rose **much beloved by flower arrangers** for the copper-mauve foliage. (Bill Swain, *Roses: Questions and Answers*, 1990, BNC)

(17) The question What is History? **beloved of university examiners**, has no definitive answer. (*Climber and Hill Walker*, 1992, BNC)

- 24 *Beloved* is attested in attributive and predicative positions, in the comparative and superlative. It is also attested in the long passive, complemented by a *by*-prepositional phrase (16) or a prepositional phrase introduced by *of* (17), showing a somewhat fuzzy perception of its status, between adjective and verb. The suffix -ED, contrary to other affixes, does not assign the word it is attached to a definitive class. The verbal function can be activated, even though *beloved* is generally used as an adjective: there are 745

occurrences of *beloved* in the BNC, of which 101 take a complement in *of*, 35 a complement in *by* and 35 are nominalised (his/her/their/N's *beloved*). *Loved* on the other hand has more restricted uses as an adjective. Apart from the collocation *loved ones*, there has to be a facilitating context, for example two coordinated adjectives in (18), or, in (19), a “semantic path” leading to the construction *liked N* (namely a context making the construction immediately understandable):

(18) Most people want to be special and know they are special to **their loved and chosen partner**. (Janet Mattinson & Christopher Clulow, *Marriage Inside Out*, 1989, BNC)

(19) She was raised in north Philadelphia in a **loving environment**, she says. “I grew up very much a **loved child**. I know it. My mother (Joyce Scott) **loves me**. My grandmother (Blue Babe) **loves me**.” (*Jet*, 2001, COCA)

25 V-EDs derived with *re-* can also occur more easily in prenominal position:

(20) They helped dedicate a **rebuilt bridge** in May, and they bundled up in cold and light rain to watch the Memorial Day parade at month's end. (*The Boston Globe*, 2017, COCA)

26 Without the prefix, *built* cannot occur in (20): \**a built bridge*. Other examples include: *redesigned*, *reread*, *rewritten*, *reopened*, etc., although collocations can licence such examples as *the written word*, certainly by analogy with *the spoken word*:

(21) For example, with TV came video tapes and with radio a whole new system for sending recordings out using the voice rather than **the written word**. (Stafford Whiteaker, *A Career in Advertising and Public Relations*, 1986, BNC)

### 2.2.3. V-ED + suffix

27 Verbs in *-ise* (GB) / *-ize* (GB, US), derived from nouns (*actualise*, *Americanise*, *authorise*, *localise*, *personalise*, *regularise*, etc.) can almost systematically be turned into adjectival participles:

(22) We've lost many of our **localised products** because they've been taken over by multi-nationals. (*Northern Echo*, BNC)

28 The suffix has the following meanings (according to the origin of the stem): “to act like, or in accordance with”; “to make (that which is expressed by the derivation)”; “make or conform to, or treat in the way of, the thing expressed by the derivation” (OED). Verbs belonging in this paradigm might then display a set of characteristics sufficient to ensure referential stability.

## 2.3. Prenominal vs postnominal V-EDs

29 The position relative to the head noun is crucial in determining the degree of stability achieved by V-ED. A prenominal position is the indication of the highest degree of stability:

(23) Well he lo – well he eats eats raw meat. He won't eat **cooked meat**, her cat won't. (BNC spoken)

- 30 In attributive position, the stative interpretation, as will be demonstrated in the following section, depends on several parameters (tense of the verb, short or long passive, semantics of the verb):

(24) “Rare” he calls it, but **it looks uncooked** to me. (Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept*, 1999)

(25) When the rice **is cooked**, gently mix in all other ingredients. (Maggie Humphreys & Les Snowdon, *The Walking Diet*, 1991, BNC)

### 3. V-ED in attributive position

#### 3.1. A criterion for the adjectival quality of V-ED

- 31 As has been noted above, one robust criterion in determining the stative and permanent property of a V-ED (and hence its adjectival quality) is the possibility of inserting it in an attributive position:

(26) At this point the young man, who had been reading **a folded newspaper**, looked up and said in a slightly truculent voice [...] (Barbara Pym, *An Unsuitable Attachment*, 1993, BNC)

- 32 The prenominal position, *folded newspaper*, can be filled with an adjectival passive participle. The reference to the process *fold* can be reactivated in a paraphrase: *The newspaper had been folded by someone*. However, in *a folded newspaper*, the previous state (“paper not folded”) and the change from the previous state to the state at the time of reference is not relevant: it is irrelevant who folded the paper. The property of newspapers to be folded is shared knowledge and therefore is not surprising and does not require any cognitive effort to be understood. On the contrary, the expression *a stuck newspaper* would be odd, unless a context explains the link between the two notions.

#### 3.2. Verbs of consumption

- 33 Another class of verbs comprises verbs that indicate that the object has disappeared because of the process denoted by the verb, for instance *eat*: there are no occurrences of *eaten food* in the COCA and BNC corpora. Something that is no longer in existence cannot become a theme. A modification through an adverb is required: *half-eaten*, *partially eaten* or the affixation of a negative prefix. *Consume*, a synonym of *eat*, has a narrower range of uses, in more technical contexts, and can occur in an attributive position, although an adverb – *locally* in (27) – is almost always required:

(27) It will then be important to gather information on local dietary and agricultural practices and beliefs to assess the feasibility of improving the production, storage, and consumption of local vitamin-A-rich foods, the introduction of new foods, or fortification of a **locally consumed food**. (*The Lancet*, 1993, BNC)



### 3.3. Negative prefixes

- 34 As was noted earlier, negative prefixes make the majority of V-EDs acceptable in an attributive position: *uneaten food* for example. With such past participles as *uneaten* (28) and *undrunk* (29), the meaning is that the food or drink is still there and the implication that they are meant to be consumed. In (28), the expression *unread scripts* does not refer to anything visible; it is a distinctive feature (a script is meant to be read, the state “unread” violates the expectation created by the semantics of the noun):

(28) I can just see them: Mum with a cottage cheese salad lying **uneaten** on her plate – Dad in the office amid piles of **unread scripts**, unable to concentrate for fear that his darling? hated? infuriating daughter lies at the bottom of the Thames, the Severn, the Atlantic... (Alison Leonard, *Gate-Crashing the Dream Party*, 1990, BNC)

(29) At that time, one could enter the building easily, wander up and down the racked and discoloured ramp, contemplate the looting of one of the door handles, even find **undrunk** wine in a cupboard. (*Royal Institute of British Architects Journal*, 1990, BNC)

- 35 In (30), the head noun *prawn* described by *unshelled* is in its initial state; the negative prefix, however, indicates that it might be otherwise:

(30) I top it with uncooked, **unshelled** prawns that have been marinated in grated fresh ginger and lime juice. (*Daily Telegraph*, BNC)

- 36 The same goes with other associations: as they are to be expected, they are not worth mentioning. Thus it is not surprising that a *hero* should be *sung*, making pointless such a construction as *\*a sung hero*; if the hero is *unsung*, he acquires a distinctive quality worth mentioning: *an unsung hero* is acceptable. As will be seen in the study, infelicitous expressions can become possible in a special context, for example when two notions are contrasted:

(31) “It’s OK sweetie,” she murmured. “You’re an *unsung hero*.” “I don’t want to be an *unsung hero*,” grumbled Kevin. “I want to be **a sung hero**. I want to have songs written about me. Grand operas. (John Moore, *Heroics for Beginners*, 2004)

- 37 It seems counter-intuitive that an *un-*prefixed V-ED should more easily occur in prenominal position as non-existence is by essence not visible. Our hypothesis is that there is an implied relation in *should* or *could*. An *unbuilt house* is a house that should be or could be built. So it follows that there is the evaluation of a distance relative to a norm which is “house = built”. *An uneaten cake* is a cake that is whole and thus in its normal state. However, it should have been eaten: the expectation is flouted – whereas *\*an eaten cake* is no longer a cake. *\*A read book* is also infelicitous as a book which has been read bears no trace of its having been read. *An unsold car* is a car that has not been sold yet: the distance is temporal in this case.

### 3.4. V-ED modified by an adverb

- 38 However, as has also been noted above in this section, modification with an adverb makes possible the use of *read* as an adjective:

(32) Visit an area, town or natural location that is featured in a **recently-read book** or an upcoming book to be discussed. (<http://www.thereadingclub.co.uk/bookclubfieldtrips.html>)

(33) Howe's history may have been "**the most commonly read book**" in Ohio "outside the Bible". (*Journal of American Culture*, 2016, COCA)

(34) He wrote a **widely read book** about his amazing recovery. (Saturday Evening Post 2008, COCA)

- 39 Even then, there are few occurrences of "ADV V-ED book" (only one occurrence in the COCA of each of the following phrases: "recently read book", "most commonly read book", "widely read book" and one occurrence in the BNC of "widely read book". There is no occurrence of "read books" without an adverb.

### 3.5. The feature + *affected*

- 40 The relationship between real-world experience and its linguistic representation (*eat a cake*, for instance) seems easy to understand. It is less so with verbs that do not denote concrete elements. Let us consider the following expressions: *teach a lesson*, *learn a lesson*. There are no occurrences in the COCA and BNC of "det. + *taught lesson*" or "det. + *a learnt lesson*".

- 41 One solution is to consider the object as affected: it has to be transformed in some way. Indeed, in *spilt milk*, the object appears in a different state: *spilt milk* is no longer milk. Fish that has been caught can become *caught fish*. However, there is no subclass of *caught fish*, as there is a subclass of *salted fish*. A context is therefore needed to grant the acceptability of *caught fish*. A "resultant state" is a better candidate to an adjective status if it is observable. Bolinger [1962: 9] makes the observation that *dented bells* is fine, but not *\*rung bells*. The mark left on a bell can be seen. As Bolinger [1967: 9] puts it:

The typical perfect participle that can be used attributively is one that leaves a mark on something.

- 42 He goes on to oppose *a scratched surface* to *\*a scratched head*. It is however to be noted that a context can be found in which *a scratched head* becomes possible:

(35) Creative people are on the whole fragile beings, and letting each other down gently and quietly was the unwritten rule. Sometimes just a blank look or a **scratched head** was enough to see a candidate quietly pulled down and consigned to the bin. ([www-scf.usc.edu/~moyerd/linds\\_redding.html](http://www-scf.usc.edu/~moyerd/linds_redding.html))

In (35), it is not a single occurrence but the iteration of the occurrence "scratch one's head", i.e. the creation of a type of typical signs which makes *a scratched head* understandable. Anyone can visualize the candidate doing a stereotyped gesture of powerlessness.

- 43 It is much more difficult to conceptualize *a learnt lesson* as it is the agent who is affected, not the object *lesson* which does not change whether it is learnt or not. Other examples include *?a devised plan*, where a qualification is necessary to make the expression acceptable: *a carefully/ cunningly devised plan*, *a \*scratched head* (Bolinger [1967: 9]), *\*a taken cab*, *\*a caught train*, *\*a seen film*, *\*a found solution*, *\*a reached destination*, *\*a handed letter*, *\*a heard voice*, *\*a loved boy*, unless *loved* is modified with an adverb: *the most loved boy I knew* (USA Today, 1998), *a much loved boy*.

- 44 The V-ED *spoken* has a different behaviour, certainly as it is implicitly contrasted with *written*:

(36) During secondary education, the use of **the spoken word** increases.  
(Susan Hinchliff, (ed.). *Teaching Clinical Nursing*, 1986)

### 3.6. The semantics of the verb

- 45 The semantics of the verbs plays an important part in the possibility for V-ED to fill the prenominal slot. A verb with a very general meaning such as *say* cannot fill the prenominal slot: \**a said instruction*. On the other hand, the verb *shout* is an acceptable candidate:

(37) Strike could hear voices through the gloom, **shouted instructions** and the growl and beep of reversing lorries unloading the carcasses. (*USA Today*, 2014, COCA)

(38) The night before, they had received **whispered instructions** to meet later. (*USA Today*, 2014, COCA)

*Shouted* and *whispered* (or other verbs describing the manner of speaking, *mumbled*, *stammered*, *grumbled*, etc.) are more specific than *say*; they do not appear redundant and can occur in prenominal position.

#### 3.6.1. Verbs of creation

- 46 Verbs of creation (Ackerman & Goldberg [1996:19]), also called “constructive accomplishments” (Grimshaw & Vikner [1993:146]) belong to the paradigm of *make*, *bake*, *build*, *draw*, and so on. They are not acceptable as attributive adjectival passive participles: \**a built barn*. As a barn is necessarily built, it is superfluous to say it (this has been theorized as the “non-redundancy constraint” (Ackerman & Goldberg [1996:21])):

the APP [adjectival past participle] must designate a property which is not already implied by the frame semantics associated with the head noun.

- 47 However, the non-redundancy constraint does not apply when the object does not necessarily come built in the first place, for example “a built model” or “a built kit”, as in the following example:

(39) Restoring **a built kit** is the next-best choice, depending on the kit’s condition and completeness. (George Bojaciuk, *Building and Detailing Scale Model Muscle Cars*, 1998)

- 48 To make the expression *built barn* acceptable, there has to be a “paradigmatic contrast” [Ackerman & Goldberg 1996], as in (40), where *built barn* is contrasted with *burnt barn*:

(40) In the Amish community what is the difference between **a built barn and a burned barn**? ([www.silosandsmokestacks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/microsoft\\_word\\_an\\_amish\\_barn\\_raising.pdf](http://www.silosandsmokestacks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/microsoft_word_an_amish_barn_raising.pdf))

- 49 Another way of making the expression right is to modify V-ED with an adverb:

(41) This was found crawling on lumber inside **a recently built barn**. (<https://bugguide.net/node/view/1589547/bgimage>)

(42) The cloth was then passed to a group of twenty or so of us who sat at a long table in **a beautifully built barn**. (Rebecca Burgess & Courtney White,

*Fibershed: Growing a Movement of Farmers, Fashion Activists, and Makers for a New Textile Economy*, 2019)

- 50 *Recently* in (41) and *beautifully* in (42) add distinctive features, temporal in (41) – limiting the scope of the referent of the head noun – and evaluative in (42). The modifiers add specificity to the noun and change the generic meaning of *build* to a more specific meaning. The focus is not just on the barn (as would be the case with *a recent barn* or *a beautiful barn*), but on the resultant state of the building process.
- 51 With a term less specific than *house* (*shelter* for example), however, the collocation is possible as an opposition *build/natural* is implicit or can be made explicit, as in the following example:

(43) Obviously, in terms of logic, there is no way that one can include all forms of **built shelter** to define architecture, and then move from a natural “shelter” to a massive structure. (David Warburton *Architecture, Power, and Religion: Hatshepsut, Amun & Karnak in Context*, 2012)

### 3.6.2. Verbs of destruction

- 52 Verbs of destruction (*annihilate, break, bulldoze, crush, damage, decimate, demolish, destroy, devastate, flatten, overturn, raze, ruin, trash, wreck, etc.*) can easily fill a prenominal slot:

(44) When I heard her voice I scanned the area and I expected to see pieces of scattered rubbish and **a demolished barn** all around me. (Brandon Swarrow, *The Barn*, 2007)

- 53 This is not surprising as the state *demolished* is the result of an irreversible process and thus completely stabilised. The non-redundancy rule applies as *demolish* is not one of the semantic features of a barn. The verbs in the list above are transitive or can be used transitively if they are not intrinsically transitive. Intransitive verbs, such as *dilapidate*, which do not passivize for lack of an agent, can also have an adjectival function: *a dilapidated barn*. The change from one state to another is gradual as it involves a slow process, and as it refers to a possible “natural” state, the result of neglect, the stabilisation process is viewed as being complete and irreversible. Proof of the adjectival features of *dilapidated* is that this word can be coordinated with a central adjective such as *old*:

(45) As she did so, she noticed that the heath adjoining the road rose up to a small hill, on top of which stood **an old and dilapidated windmill**. (Robert Moss, *The Challenge Book of Brownie Stories*, 1988, BNC)

- 54 Another factor contributing to the adjectival features of *dilapidated* is that the verb *dilapidate* (with the meaning ‘to fall or cause to fall into ruin or decay’, *Collins English Dictionary*) is rarely used in present-day English. Other examples of an adjectival use of an intransitive verb include *a much-travelled woman, a much-travelled road, a confessed killer, a practiced pianist, an experienced mountaineer, a versed and practiced maritime professional*.

### 3.6.3. Ergative verbs

- 55 With ergative verbs (termed “unaccusative predicates” by Ackerman & Goldberg [1996: 19]), the resultant state, obtained independently from any agentive source, also has a high degree of stability, for example *a frozen river*, or *melted ice*:

(46) Three of the meteorites were found on rocky terrain where they may have fallen directly or been deposited by **melted ice**. (*New Scientist*, BNC)

- 56 In the transitive use (*melted chocolate*), the process is recoverable (“someone melted the chocolate”); when the process is “natural”, the resulting state is totally detached from the process. Melting ice is not ice, nor is it water. With *faded*, the process *fade* has reached a final stage. The resultant state is therefore stable, which is not the case with V-ING, where the process has not reached its stabilised stage:

(47) The documents, which were handwritten in **fading ink** (Greg Cox, *The Librarians and the Lost Lamp*, 2017, COCA)

- 57 The semantics of ergative verbs indicates a change of state, so the stress is placed on the resultant state, and the change is encoded as desirable or, on the contrary, adversative (which is the most frequent case in the COCA and BNC). It can further be encoded as irreversible (*fallen leaves*), and this feature facilitates the adjectival conversion. The same phenomenon can be observed with *fallen* in collocation with *soldier* with the meaning ‘dead’, for instance in the following title:

(48) “The Cult of the **Fallen Soldiers** in Germany.” (GL Mosse, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 14, No. 1, Jan. 1979)

When the process is reversible or temporary, then the V-ED + N construction is not attested – *\*a fallen tiger*:

(49) The tiger **fell** in the snow. It got up and shook its head. (Caleb Scott Prentiss, *Zipharus Chronicles: the Crystal of Axiom*, 2009)

- 58 As illustrated above, the stative interpretation relies in part on a cultural construal and perception of the world. We know from experience that a tiger can get up after having fallen when a leaf cannot. Where *fallen soldier* is a euphemism for *dead*, with a *fallen woman*, the question of whether the woman can be rehabilitated is not the point. In the corpus, the collocation is culturally marked and refers to what appears as an unchangeable condition.

### 3.6.4. Resultative constructions

- 59 With resultatives of the form  $V_{\text{ergative}} + \text{ADJ}$ , as in (50) below, an attributive use of V-ED is not acceptable:

(50) The dream by itself would have been a trifle, but while she was dreaming the window of the nursery **blew open**, and a boy did drop on the floor. (James M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, 1911)

- 60 Such verbs induce a sudden change of state, and thus the unacceptability of *\*a blown open door*. The object, namely a window in (50), has not incurred any change; the focus is placed on the action of blowing the window open, not on the window itself.

Furthermore, this process happens once, so being blown open is not a property of the door. On the contrary, with a resultative construction involving a transitive verb, for example *to paint a door red*, the state of the door is different once the action has ended. A permanent resultant state can be construed:

(51) Big metallic lock hanging on a **red painted door**.  
([www.shutterstock.com/fr/search/red%2Bpainted%2Bdoor?page=4](http://www.shutterstock.com/fr/search/red%2Bpainted%2Bdoor?page=4))

### 3.6.5. Prepositional phrases and phrasal verbs

- 61 When a locative prepositional phrase is an adjunct to a verb, V-ED cannot occur in an attributive position:

(52) Then **she jumped over the hedge**, like a hunter, into the next field.  
(W. Jenkyn Thomas, *The Welsh Fairy Book*, 1907)

- 62 From the sentence *she jumped over the hedge*, a “V-ED + N” structure is not licenced: \**A jumped over hedge*. The object refers to a position in space and is consequently not affected by the event denoted by the verb. Even if the object is affected in some way, a past participle of a prepositional verb cannot be used in attributive position (\**a kicked at door*). Only prepositional verbs such as *looked after* can be used attributively:

(53) A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a **looked after child**. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer. (<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/>)

- 63 Transitive phrasal verbs (*hand in*, *knock down*) are submitted to the same constraints (non-redundancy, affectedness) as simple verbs: \**handed-in essays* does not answer any communicative needs, whereas in *knocked-down buildings*, the end-state is visible, the change irreversible:

(54) The reason is that when it comes to training for a building collapse, there’s just nothing like a **knocked-down building**, and those can be hard to find. (<http://vaildaily.com>)

- 64 A locative prepositional phrase, however, does not undergo any change of state so there is no transition between two states and consequently no end-state, unless the noun is sufficiently differentiated by a characteristic feature common to a whole subclass (*a looked after child* in (53)). The possibility of preposing a V-ED is context sensitive. This is what we will be looking at in the next section.

## 3.7. Facilitating contexts

- 65 At discourse level, a facilitation process (i.e. a text that “breaks a path” to the form considered) makes comprehension of an occurrence of V-ED in attributive position more immediate. For instance, in (55), the association between *insulted* and *goddess* is prepared by the explanation given in the context before, “rejects the lustful invitations of Venus”:

(55) Its roots are in Shakespeare's early poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Adonis, cold and puritanical, **rejects the lustful invitations of Venus**, the supreme goddess, He goes off hunting, and as a punishment for his presumptuous chastity, is killed by a boar. This avenging boar, the agent of **the insulted goddess**, is henceforth identified with the destructive forces that produce tragedy. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1992)

- 66 There are also special contexts, linked to register or form, which licence what might be otherwise unusual V-ED + N collocations. Below, two such contexts are examined: specialised contexts, captions and titles.

### 3.7.1. Specialised contexts

- 67 Specialised contexts occur in scientific or technical discourse characterised, roughly speaking, by a higher degree of monoreferentiality and precision (Gotti [2003]) than in general language. Following Gotti, Grygiel [2017: 4] adds: "monoreferentiality means that there is one word form used for one referent and its exact sense can be inferred without reference to the context". Our hypothesis is that in specialised contexts V-EDs are stabilised in adjectival forms as they are endowed with a technical meaning whose definition needs to be stable.

- 68 For example, the association of *taught* and *course* seems unlikely as a course is necessarily taught. It is however a possible and meaningful expression in the context of universities. In (56), *taught course* refers to a subclass of courses and is opposed to a "degree by research" (and not to an *untaught course* which would carry a negative connotation):

(56) One of the key differences between postgraduate programmes is whether you choose to do **a taught course**, or study for a degree by research. (<https://gradireland.com/further-study/advice-and-funding/advice/research-vs-taught>)

In the same way, expressions which would seem odd, like "a looked after child", are made acceptable in a technical language (see example 53 above). Many collocations used in specialised English have become lexicalized: *restricted area*, *signed copy*, *inbuilt engine*, *used car*, *knocked down house* (an assembled house in the US), *sealed ball bearing*, *heated bearing*, *tapered roller*, etc.

### 3.7.2. Captions and titles of paintings and photographs

- 69 When captions or titles of paintings or photographs describe a static scene, a landscape for instance, V-EDs easily occur in pre-nominal position. The text is an explanation of what one can see in the picture. It is therefore not necessary to construct a relation between the V-ED form and the noun it describes. Occurrences of "V-ED N" that would not normally be possible can become acceptable when in captions. For example, *fallen* describing an animate object:

(57) "Mountain landscape with **a fallen donkey**" (Hans III Momper Ios de Jordaens)

In this case, it is the painting which is static; its title describes a scene which appears to be "frozen"; the donkey is lying on the ground. It might well be a temporary situation, but for the viewer, it is a state that has no temporal boundaries.



- 70 In the following examples, “destroyed” becomes a descriptive quality in (58) and “a cut field” is easily conceivable in (59) (the participle usually appears in a negative form, *uncut*):

(58) This photo shows the **destroyed house** of Angela and Brad Frase after an explosion in Sterling. ([www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia/image/ap\\_house\\_explosion\\_racial\\_slurs\\_27698jpg/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia/image/ap_house_explosion_racial_slurs_27698jpg/))

(59) A single hay bale on a **cut field** under a cloudy sky; Ravensworth, North Yorkshire, England. ([www.pictorem.com](http://www.pictorem.com))

- 71 A caption or title can even allow the use in attributive position of a verb (*sleep* in the example below) whose object is in a prepositional phrase (*in [a] bed*):

(60) Low angle view of a **slept-in bed** with a messy sheet, no blankets, in a blue and white bedroom home design. ([stock.adobe.com/fr/images/low-angle-view-of-a-slept-in-bed-with-a-messy-sheet-no-blankets-in-a-blue-and-white-bedroom-home-design/272191662](https://stock.adobe.com/fr/images/low-angle-view-of-a-slept-in-bed-with-a-messy-sheet-no-blankets-in-a-blue-and-white-bedroom-home-design/272191662))

- 72 In the titles of articles or books as well, the constraint of brevity may allow the use of an otherwise hardly acceptable “V-ED + N” construction. The article then provides the context which helps remove any ambiguity as to the interpretation of V-ED + N:

(61) How to Raise a **Fallen Horse**. We have seen it recommended by a gentleman who has had much experience in the matter, that when a horse has fallen from the slippery state of the ground, the readiest method of enabling him to rise is to put an old rug or carpet under his fore feet [...] (*Scientific American*, 1858)

- 73 In the same manner, a description, a scene discovered by a narrator makes a favouring context for a stative interpretation of passive forms – which can then be identified as “statal passives” [Palmer 1968]:

(62) I left the bathroom and went into the big room again. Carlisle’s shirt, tie, and jacket **were thrown** over the wooden chair. His shoes were on the floor under the chair, and his socks **were balled** inside the shoes. Stephanie’s dress and underwear **were heaped** on the seat of the chair. (Ed McBain, *Vanishing Ladies*, 1961)

The verbs *throw*, *ball* and *heap* are verbs of activity, implicating a change of state. In (62), it is the result of the activity denoted by the verb which is discovered through the eyes of the narrator.

### 3.8. Adjectives derived from other adjectives

- 74 A few adjectives have V-ED counterparts: *open/opened*; *yellow/yellowed* (and all colour adjectives):

(63) Talbot thanked him, rose, washed the sleep from his face and eyes and made his way to the admiral’s quarters. A shirt sleeved Hawkins beckoned him to join himself and Montgomery at the breakfast table. [...] Van Gelder knocked on the **opened door** and entered, a message slip in his hand. (Alistair MacLean, *Santorini*, 1987, <https://arounddate.com/santorini-by-alistair-maclean/>)



(64) [...] she was bold enough to tip-toe towards the drawing room where she hesitated again and peered round the door. [...] She knocked on the **open door** and Mr Browning came through from the other room. (Margaret Forster, *Lady's Maid*, 1990, BNC)

(65) Apples of many shades of **yellow** and red, brown and gold were laid out on **yellowed newspaper**, line after line, row upon row, on broad slatted shelves. (Rachel Anderson, *Paper Faces*, 1991, BNC)

The difference between *open* and *opened* is not as clear-cut as that between *yellow* and *yellowed*. A door has to go through a process to be in an “open” state and unless *open* has the meaning ‘making an opening’ (“a newly opened door”), where the resultant state is not opposed to “closed” as in a door being open or closed, agentivity is implicit in both *close* and *closed*. *Yellowed*, on the other hand, expresses a (negative) process. The verb is intransitive and although no agentivity is present, there is a cause responsible for the gradual change of state.

The end result is the same. A paper is usually white by default. With *yellow paper*, the state *yellow* has no relation to a previous state. With *yellowed*, the state is reached after a transformation and follows from a previous state. There are here two degrees of stabilisation, which can be defined by their relation or not to another state. It is the same with other central adjectives (*hot*, *cool* for example). In (66), the head noun is a device; it is important to mention the process, not just the end-state:

(66) **Heated and cooled seats** are available on the Reserve model. (*The Detroit News*, 2017, COCA)

- 75 The same goes for all doublets: *dry/dried*, and all derived verbs from adjectives which in their turn generate past participles with an adjective value – *damp/dampened*; *soft/soften*; *red/redden*. This implies that they keep some of the processual value of the verb.

### 3.9. Two past participles

- 76 Some verbs have dual forms in the past participle, for instance *rotted* and *rotten*:

(67) The house, a shingled box, had a sunken porch, a **rotted roof**, and windows shot out by teens with BB guns. (Stephanie Gayle, *Idyll Threats*: a Thomas Lynch Novel, 2016, COCA)

(68) It seemed to have fallen into disrepair overnight, peeling paint, **rotten** roof, rusted gutters. (Ruth Moose, *Doing it at the Dixie Dew*, 2014)

It would be tempting to say that *rotten* corresponds to a state cut off from the process leading to it and *rotted* implies a resultant state, with an underlying process. The corpus, however, does not show any clear difference between the two forms, no more than between *lighted* and *lit* (even though each form has some specialised uses, for example *sun-lit*). The verb *bereave* also has two participles: *bereft* means *dispossessed*, *bereaved* refers to the loss of relatives (OED).

### 3.10. V-ED in passive constructions

- 77 V-EDs in passive constructions are sometimes referred to as verbal passive participles (Lundquist [2013]). This terminology will be adopted here. In a long passive (with a by prepositional phrase), a stative value is incompatible with the mention of an agent:

(69) About 59 percent of the 130 women surveyed **were hired by smaller companies** when they returned to work. (*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 2005, COCA)

- 78 A short, agentless passive opens the way to a stative interpretation (and is thus in the paradigm of statal passives):

(70) It gradually dawned on me that not only the minister, the organist, the usher, the photographer and the chauffeur **were hired**, so were the best man and the bridesmaids. (David Lodge, *Paradise News*, 1991)

- 79 The mention of the agent who hired the photographer and the chauffeur is irrelevant in this context and so is the change from one state (*not hired*) to another (*hired*). Although an agent could be retrieved (for instance with a change in aspectuality: *they had been hired*), the focus is on a state, not the process of hiring. Even with a verb like *smash* which has semelfactive properties (*\*he has been smashing the lock for twenty minutes* is not acceptable), a resultant state can be construed and *smashed* is an adjective:

(71) The hallway was dark, the room itself, **unlocked** since **the lock was smashed**, was even darker. (P. D. James, *A Taste for Death*, 1986)

The V-ED *unlocked* expresses a state and has adjectival properties: it is on the same syntactic level as the central adjective *dark* and has a negative prefix which reinforces its stability. However, even with a V-ED, it is still possible to focus on a dynamic verbal quality:

(72) “When do you get the twenty-five? **Before or after** the cell is **unlocked?**” (Ed McBain, *Vanishing Ladies*, 1961)

- 80 Conversely, the prepositional phrases *by tall elms* in (73) or *with books* in (74) are not agentive and no underlying process can be retrieved:

(73) There was a house **surrounded by tall elms** that looked as though it might be a Queen Anne. (Roald Dahl, “Parson’s Pleasure”, 1960)

(74) Peter looked round the Bishop’s study, which was entirely **lined with books**. (Joanna Trollope, *The Rector’s Wife*, 1992, BNC)

There is a simple mention of the existence of *house* and *elms* and *study* and *books* which can be shown in the following paraphrase: *there were tall elms around it* and *there were lines of books*. The prepositional phrases are mandatory complements, as there cannot be a default interpretation as in *His army was surrounded*, where the agent need not be specified to be understood.

- 81 Other constructions, such as “HAVE X V-ED”, allow a stative reading of the verb:

(75) It was hard work, and it took several minutes before he **had** the whole thing more or less **smashed** to pieces. (Roald Dahl, “Parson’s Pleasure”, 1960)

(76) There was a slight pause. He **had** his hands **clasped** high in front of him, level with his chest, and he was rubbing one palm against the other, making a soft scraping noise. (Roald Dahl, “Parson’s Pleasure”, 1960)

The resultant states, “smashed” and “clasped”, are located relative to the agent “he” by the locator *have*. The underlying process is not activated as it would be in “he **had smashed** the whole thing more or less to pieces” or “He **had clasped** his hands”. For

(76) another rewording could be: “his hands were in a certain position – they were clasped”.

- 82 Palmer [1968: 89] recognizes that even with statal passives, there are “degrees of adjectiveness” (with “married” in “they are married and happy” which has “some adjectival functions” and verbs such as “defeated” and “killed” which do not satisfy all the requirements of a typical adjective).

## 4. Summary of the results

- 83 Table 1 below summarises the observations made in this article and indicates the degree of “adjectiveness” based on the criteria defined by Quirk *et al* [1985: 404] and Huddleston & Pullum [2002: 528] to identify a typical adjective: the possibility of appearing in attributive, predicative and postpositive functions, of being gradable, premodified by *very* or adverbs such as *remarkably* or *surprisingly*, and lastly of being used as a comparative or superlative.
- 84 The letter in each column refers to a specific function. The number obtained in the column “Adjective qualities” is only indicative and is intended to give an idea of the more or less complete inclusion of a V-ED form in the class of adjectives. As has been shown in the article, there are differences in the adjective quality of the V-ED forms according not only to the semantics of the verb, but also to the nature of the subject and the object and context. These complex interactions are difficult to quantify.
- 85 The column which gives the most important information about the adjectival status of V-EDs is (a): the possibility of having V-ED in attributive position. In predicative function, V-ED is often part of a passive construction. The absence of an agent will add to a potential adjectival interpretation.

Table 1: Degree of “adjectiveness” of V-EDs

	(a) attributive	(b) predicative	(c) postpositive	(d) gradable (for instance premodified by <i>very</i> )	(e) premodified by such adverbs as <i>remarkably</i> , <i>surprisingly</i>	(f) Comparative / superlative	Adjective qualities	Example
HAVE V-ED	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	He had clasped his hands.

<p><b>Prepositional phrases</b> <i>(jumped over)</i></p>	-	+	-	-	-	-	1	<p>(a) *A jumped over hedge.                  (b) The hedge was jumped over.                  (c) *The hedge jumped over ...                  (d) *The hedge very jumped over.                  (e) *The hedge surprisingly jumped over.                  (f) *The hedge more jumped over.</p>
<p><b>Resultative constructions</b> <i>(blown open)</i></p>	-	+	+	-	-	-	2	<p>(a) *A blown open door.                  (b) The door was blown open.                  (c) A safe weighing about 500 pounds, with the door blown open, was found in a spot off the Carlyle road.                  (d) *Very blown open.                  (e) *Surprisingly blown open.                  (f) * More blown open.</p>

<p>Prefixed V-ED (especially with verbs such as <i>like</i> or <i>read</i>, not found in attributive position)</p>	+	+	-/+	-	-	-/+	2 or 4	<p>(a) An unliked child/ a beloved child/ an unread book.</p> <p>(b) The child is unliked/ beloved/the book is read.</p> <p>(c) *The child unliked, *the book read [however possible with some V-EDs: "Jeff seemed like a man unburdened"].</p> <p>(d) *Very unliked / *very beloved/*very unread.</p> <p>(e) Lucille was surprisingly unliked by her peers.</p> <p>(f) *More unliked/ *more unread. ("more/most beloved" is acceptable)</p>
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<p><b>Resultative constructions, with result a normal outcome of action.</b> <i>(painted red)</i></p>	+	+	+	-	-	-	3	<p>(a) A red painted door.                  (b) The door was painted red.                  (c) I noticed the shed, tucked in between two fat elm trees, with the door painted red.                  (d) *The door very painted red.                  (e) *The door surprisingly painted red.                  (f) *The door more painted red.</p>
<p><b>Agentless passives</b> “actional passives” <i>(hired)</i></p>	+	+	+	-	-	-	3	<p>(a) A hired chauffeur.                  (b) The chauffeur was hired.                  (c) The services are performed by an employee hired after March 31.                  (d) *Very hired.                  (e) *An employee surprisingly hired.                  (f) *An employee more hired.</p>

<p>V-ED V = stative verb (<i>situate</i>)</p>	-	+	+	-	+	-	3	<p>(a) *A situated home. (b) The home is situated in the Old Town. (c) A home situated in the Old Town. (d) *A very situated home. (e) A remarkably situated home. (f) *Most situated.</p>
<p>V-ED Verbs of creation + N referring to object created (<i>built</i>)</p>	-	+	+	+	-	-	3	<p>(a) *A built house. (b) The house was built. (c) The story of the house built in a day. (d) *Very built. (e) Remarkably built. (f) *More built.</p>

<p>V-ED + N Object denoted by N is not affected (<i>reach+ destination</i>)</p>	-	+	+	-	+	-	3	<p>(a) *Reached destination. (b) The destination was reached. (c) True discovery has more to do with the path followed than the destination reached. (d) *Very reached. (e) Surprisingly reached. (f) *More reached.</p>
<p>V-ED + suffix (<i>localised</i>)</p>	+	+	+	-	+	-	4	<p>(a) Localised products. (b) The products are localised. (c) The products localised are the following: ... (d) *Very localised. (e) Remarkably localised. (f) *Most localised.</p>



<p><b>Verbs of destruction</b> (<i>collapsed</i>)</p>	+	+	+	-	+	-	4	<p>(a) A collapsed roof.                  (b) The roof was collapsed.                  (c) The building was dark even with the roof collapsed.                  (d) *Very collapsed.                  (e) *Remarkably collapsed.                  (f) ?More collapsed.</p>
<p><b>Phrasal verbs</b> (<i>knocked down</i>)</p>	+	+	+	-	+	-	4	<p>(a) A knocked-down building.                  (b) The building was knocked-down.                  (c) The building knocked down was not derelict and abandoned.                  (d) *The very knocked down building.                  (e) Joshua at the 2012 Olympics, was surprisingly knocked down and beaten on points.                  (f) *The building was more knocked-down.</p>

<p><b>Ergative verbs</b> <b>(melted)</b></p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>(a) Melted ice. (b) “It appears, that when a considerable part of the ice was melted (...).” [the verb is, however, not used ergatively in this case] (c) The volume of ice melted was 20–30. (d) She handed him a very melted ice cream. (e) *Surprisingly melted ice. (f) The National Post reported the 2019 melting season could set a record for the most melted ice in history.</p>
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<p>Adjectives derived from other adjectives (<i>cooled</i>)</p>	+	+	+	-	+	+	5	<p>(a) Cooled seats are available on the Reserve model.</p> <p>(b) The cream was cooled slowly to 30°.</p> <p>(c) I don't know if the air cooled was really that bad or not.</p> <p>(d) ?Very cooled.</p> <p>(e) The air was remarkably cooled and freshened.</p> <p>(f) The air at land, being more cooled than that at sea, will blow from the land towards the sea.</p>
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<p>V-ED with change of state verbs (fold)</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6	<p>(a) A folded newspaper.                  (b) The newspaper was folded.                  (c) The newspaper folded.                  (d) He saw the newspaper folded as indicated.                  (e) You threw the shirt in a pile of surprisingly folded clean clothes.                  (f) The nuclear envelope was more folded than in control cells.</p>
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<p>Technical/ specialised context (<i>collapsed</i> in the field of medicine)</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6	<p>(a) A collapsed lung or blood vessel.</p> <p>(b) The lung was collapsed to one-third its size.</p> <p>(c) A partial collapsed lung, with approximately half of a lung collapsed, was assigned a 30 percent rating.</p> <p>(d) *Very collapsed.</p> <p>(e) The lung was remarkably collapsed, so that the integument was drawn in towards the cavity of the chest.</p> <p>(f) The lung on the right side was more collapsed than that of the left side.</p>
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<p>Agentless passives “statal passives” (<i>married</i>)</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6	<p>(a) A married couple. (b) They were married. (c) The couple married was Charles C. Thomas and Emmeline Session. (d) [stylistically marked] If I get married, I want to be very married. (e) That couple, remarkably married for 49 years, is headlining 8 p.m. Friday at Orleans Showroom. (f) [stylistically marked] I want to be married. Entirely so. In fact, I would like to be more married than most couples are.</p>
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<p>V-ED V = <b>dynamic verb</b> (<i>boil</i>)</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	6	<p>(a) How long is boiled water safe to drink?</p> <p>(b) The kettle switches itself off automatically when water is boiled.</p> <p>(c) Tea was made with water boiled in a kettle.</p> <p>(d) [possible, although less freely than with central, typical adjectives (<i>nice</i> for instance)] “A very boiled and tasty rice soup.”</p> <p>(e) It is remarkably boiled with a special red wine sauce.</p> <p>(f) A more boiled egg is more suitable for use in a deviled eggs recipe.</p>
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86 In Table 2, the context or the structure of the examples provides the adjectival interpretation. The only criterion is the possibility for V-ED of having an attributive function, therefore the criteria used in Table 1 are irrelevant as there is no possibility of variation.

Table 2: Degree of “adjectiveness” of V-EDs based on context or structure

	Attributive	Example
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Captions and titles	+	Mountain landscape with a fallen donkey. Collapsed Flybe tells passengers not to travel to airports. [In this example, a metaphorical use may also be a contributing factor to an attributive use of V-ED]
HAVE N V-ED	+	He had his hands clenched.

## Conclusion

- 87 Creating adjectives in discourse serves a communicative function: describing and evaluating a head noun, referring to subtypes denoted by the head noun, referring to a characteristic property of the head noun.
- 88 The main criterion in determining whether a verb in the past participle is an adjective is the presence or not of agentivity. In a typical adjective, there is no underlying agentivity: for instance, the adjective *clean* in *a clean shirt* describes a state and even though a change of state might have occurred (*the shirt was dirty and it is now clean*), it cannot be encoded in the adjective and has to be expressed lexically with adverbs or complements (*the shirt is now clean*). In V-ED forms, except in fossilised or lexicalised past participles, the reference to agentivity and hence to a change of state cannot be completely suppressed. At best, it is demoted and can in most cases be reactivated. It is therefore not a straightforward change of category from verb to adjective and -ED cannot be considered a derivational suffix that would automatically create new lexical units. A number of parameters in the stabilisation process necessary for the creation of an adjective have been surveyed: the presence of an adverb which limits the scope of an otherwise too generic V-ED or has an evaluative function, V-ED in a system of opposition or in a list and the semantics of the verb and facilitating contexts.
- 89 Therefore, V-EDs are not typical adjectives (they are not all gradable, do not all take the comparative and superlative, cannot all take both predicative and attributive functions). Yet they still form a class – even though it is heterogeneous – whose common feature is the construction of a more or less referentially stabilised end-result.

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## NOTES

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2. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (online edition) gives the following definition: "(...) an adjective formed from a verb, usually, though not necessarily, constituting an inflection, and typically closely related to the source verb in meaning; spec. a participle or participial adjective."
3. Parsons [1990] makes a distinction between "target states" (reversible, transitory) and "resultant states" (irreversible, "holds forever after"). Various authors have taken up this terminology (among others, Kratzer [2000]).
4. Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition.
5. "A human agent is not necessarily a true agent. A sentence like *I was much stunned by my friends* is acceptable to the extent that *by my friends* is not a true agent but an agent of result: 'I was much stunned as a result of my friends' being there, as a result of something they did', etc." [Bolinger 1972: 201]

## ABSTRACTS

Among the different ways an adjective can be formed, one of them is the use of the past participle of a verb, as in, for instance: *The house was tucked far back from the main road*. This process is not a straightforward case of derivation: an ambiguity often remains as to the status of the V-ED form, between adjective and verb, especially with adjectival passives. The aim of this article is to show how verbs can be "stabilised" into adjectives. With *excited* in *they were excited*, the stabilisation is complete, whereas with *locked* in *the door was locked*, the deriving verb can be reactivated, as in *the door was suddenly locked*. The parameters surveyed are: the semantics of the verb, agentivity (recoverable or not), prefixing (for instance the prefix *be-* in *bedecked* or the negative prefix *un-* in *unchecked*), lexicalization (particularly the contribution of the noun in a collocation of the type *abandoned child*) and, finally, syntax (attributive or predicative position). The conclusion which is reached is that instability is inherent to the use of V-ED adjectives as any variation (the presence of an adverb for example) can change their interpretation. The process of stabilisation is seen as linked to two major parameters: the suppression of the origin of the potential change of state and the backgrounding of agentivity.

Parmi les différentes manières de former un adjectif, l'une d'entre elles est le recours à un verbe au participe passé, comme dans, par exemple, *The house was tucked far back from the main road*. Ce processus n'est pas un cas classique de dérivation : une ambiguïté souvent demeure quant au

statut de ces formes en V-ED, oscillant entre verbe et adjectif. Le but de cet article est de montrer de quelle façon les verbes peuvent être « stabilisés » pour devenir des adjectifs. Avec *excited* dans *they were excited*, la stabilisation est complète, alors qu'avec *locked* dans *the door was locked*, le verbe dérivant peut être réactivé, comme dans *the door was suddenly locked*. Les paramètres étudiés sont : la sémantique du verbe, l'agentivité (récupérable ou pas), la présence de préfixes (par exemple le préfixe *be-* dans *bedecked* ou le préfixe négatif *un-* dans *unchecked*), la lexicalisation (et plus particulièrement la contribution du nom à une collocation de type *abandoned child*) et enfin la syntaxe (position épithète ou attribut). La conclusion est que l'instabilité est inhérente à l'emploi d'adjectifs en V-ED car toute variation (la présence d'un adverbe par exemple) peut changer leur interprétation. Le processus de stabilisation est considéré comme étant lié à deux paramètres majeurs : la suppression de l'origine du changement potentiel et la mise en arrière-plan de l'agentivité.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** participe passé, participes adjectifs, dérivation, agentivité, passif, stabilisation référentielle

**Keywords:** past participle, participial adjectives, derivation, agentivity, passive, referential stabilisation

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